MEDIEVAL
SPAWN
AND
WITCHBLADE
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MEDIEVAL SPAWN AND WITCHBLADE

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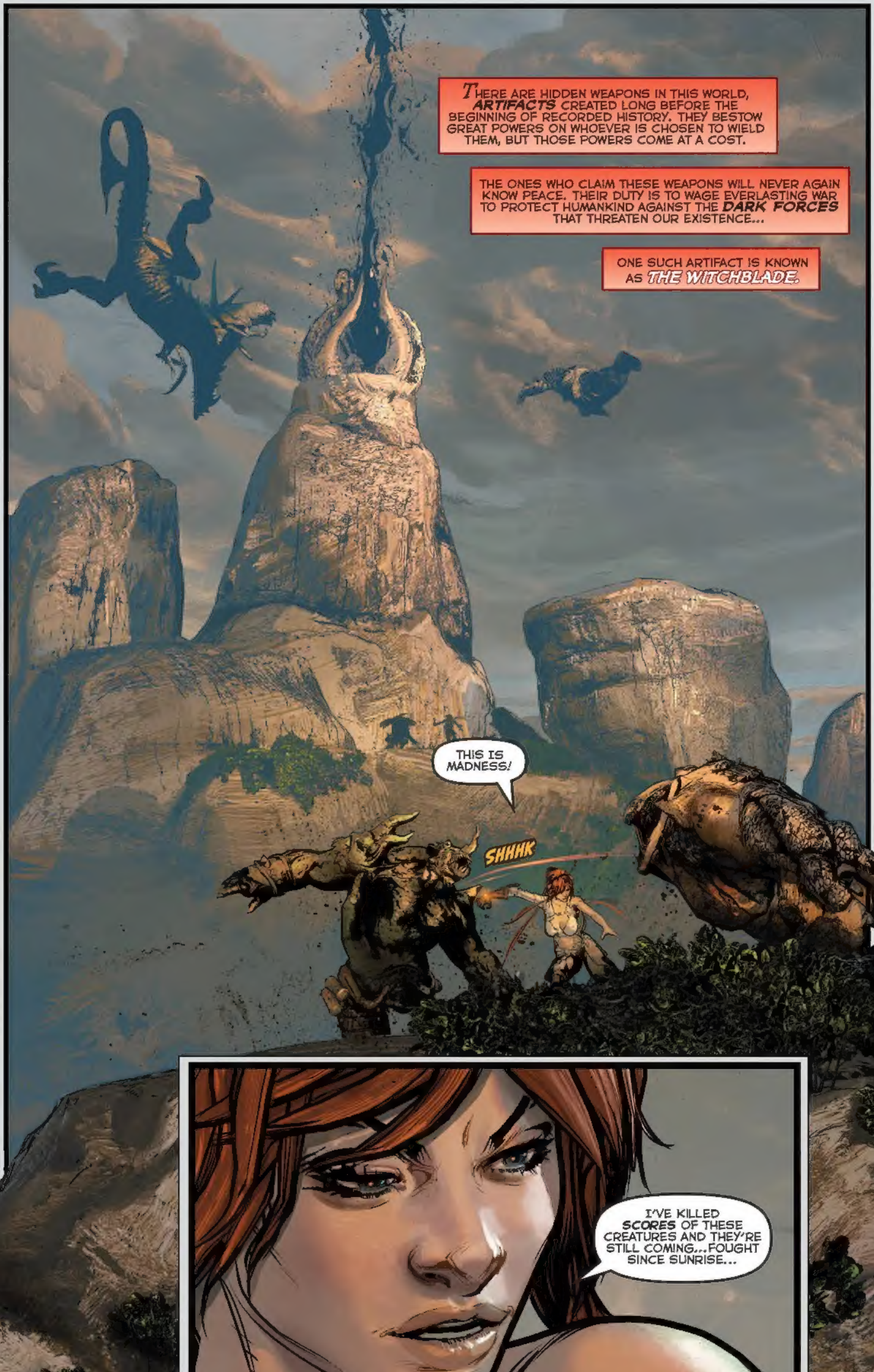

THERE ARE HIDDEN WEAPONS IN THIS WORLD, ARTIFACTS CREATED LONG BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF RECORDED HISTORY. THEY BESTOW GREAT POWERS ON WHOEVER IS CHOSEN TO WIELD THEM, BUT THOSE POWERS COME AT A COST.
THE ONES WHO CLAIM THESE WEAPONS WILL NEVER AGAIN KNOW PEACE. THEIR DUTY IS TO WAGE EVERLASTING WAR TO PROTECT HUMANKIND AGAINST THE DARK FORCES THAT THREATEN OUR EXISTENCE...
ONE SUCH ARTIFACT IS KNOWN AS THE WITCHBLADE.
THIS IS MADNESS!
SHHHK
I'VE KILLED SCORES OF THESE CREATURES AND THEY'RE STILL COMING...FOUGHT SINCE SUNRISE...

SOONER OR LATER ONE OF THEM WILL GET LUCKY.

I HAVE TO TAKE THIS TO THE SOURCE.

IT LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF TEMPLE.

A TEMPLE INDEED, BUT WHAT DARK GODS ARE WORSHIPED HERE...? WHAT BLOODY RITES PERFORMED TO SUMMON SUCH FOUL BEASTS?

THEY SEEM TO BE WEAKER HERE, FRESH-BORN AND UNSTEADY ON THEIR FEET.
THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM. SOME KIND OF GATEWAY...
...AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GETTING READY TO SPIT OUT MORE OF THOSE VERMIN.
LET'S SEE IF I CAN SHUT YOUR MOUTH PERMANENTLY...

KABOOM!
Ungh. THAT WASN'T QUITE WHAT I PLANNED.
THANK THE GODS IT WORKED. I DON'T THINK I COULD FACE ANY MORE OF THOSE.
NEED TO...
REST..?

All it takes is one moment of carelessness... one single lapse of concentration... one powerful foe too many.
AAHH
You can win a hundred battles, defeat a thousand enemies...
...but when you fight to the death, you only get to lose ONCE...

MANY YEARS LATER...
ARTIFACTS WERE OFTEN LOST FOR LONG PERIODS, BUT THEY WERE NEVER ENTIRELY FORGOTTEN.
IN THE TIME OF WHICH I SPEAK, THERE WAS A BAND OF WARRIORS KNOWN AS THE TRUSTED.
AMONG THEM WAS A SEEKER OF ARTIFACTS KNOWN AS THE SEA HAWK...
...THOUGH SOME HAD OTHER NAMES FOR HIM...
HEY! YOU BARNACLE-CRUSTED DUNG FLAP!

YOU NEARLY SUNK US BOTH!

ARE YOU BLIND?!
THANKFULLY, YES. SO, I'M SPARED THE SIGHT OF YOUR UNDOUBTEDLY HIDEOUS FEATURES.
SADLY THOUGH, I AM NOT DEAF.

AND MY SENSE OF SMELL IS EQUALLY ACUTE.
IF I AM NOT MISTAKEN, THAT UNIQUE STENCH OF FISH, BEER AND SEWAGE COULD ONLY COME FROM THE TAVERNS AND BROTHELS OF BLEAK HAVEN.

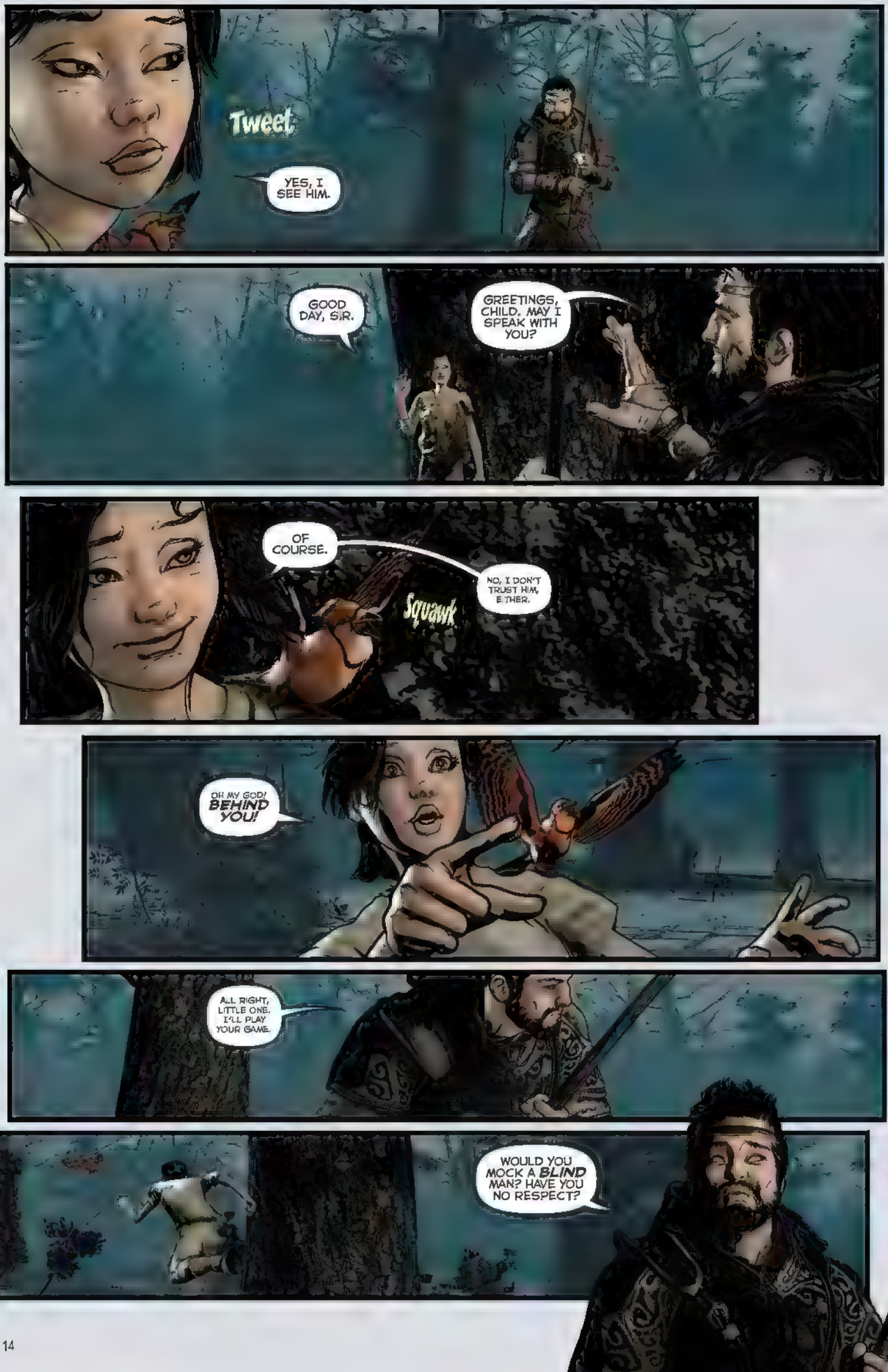
HMMM... THE OMENS ARE PROMISING.
A JOURNEY MADE, LIES TURN TO TRUTH...
...THE MISTS ABATE, THE SIGNS GROW CLEAR-
HERE'S A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS, BEGGARMAN.
MY THOUGHTS ARE BEYOND VALUE, FOOL!
NOW I MUST BEGIN AGAIN.

SPIRITS OF THE AGES, I AM YOUR TRUE SERVANT. I WOULD GLADLY GIVE MY LIFE TO YOUR SERVICE, YOU KNOW THIS.
BUT I NEED MORE THAN VAGUE HINTS AND UNCERTAIN PROMISES.
GIVE ME A TRUE VISION. SHOW ME MY PATH.
As his fingers pass over the rune stones and the images flow through his mind, Sea Hawk sighs, knowing that, for good or ill, his prayer has been answered.

"DAMNATION! THAT'S OUR GUILD SHIP! AND FROM THE LOOK OF HER, TOO STORM-DAMAGED TO MAKE THE RENDEZVOUS."
"IT SEEMS I MUST PURSUE MY QUEST ALONE."
"A MOTHER AND CHILD. THEY ARE WITCHES, YET UNLIKE ANY I HAVE KNOWN."
"COULD SHE BE THE ONE?"
"THE WITCHBLADE! SO IT TRULY DOES EXIST."
AND THERE'S A SOUL IN CONFLICT
"AND ANOTHER SOUL STEEPED IN DARKNESS."

THIS IS NO VISION FROM THE PAST OR FUTURE. THIS IS CLOSE-BY. THIS IS NOW.
THE SAME GIRL, GROWN NOW ALMOST TO WOMANHOOD, ALONE AND HUNGRY.
NO. NOT QUITE ALONE.
THIEVING BIRD! I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOUR GAMES!

SO SHE HAS GROWN TO BE A THIEF.
AH WELL, SHE HAS HER WITS ABOUT HER, AND THIEVERY IS A USEFUL TALENT IN OUR BUSINESS.
A PITY IT MUST BE A FEMALE WHO TAKES ON THE POWER OF THE WITCHBLADE. IT WOULD MAKE A PERFECT ADDITION TO MY ARMORY.
STILL, SHE IS YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE SHAPED TO THE WILL OF A WISE MENTOR.
SO, I ACCEPT THE CHOICE OF MY GUIDING SPIRITS.
TAKE ME TO HER.
YOU KNOW, RAZORBEAK, BREAD AND BERRIES MAY BE ENOUGH FOR YOU, BUT I WOULD RATHER DINE ON SOMETHING WITH A BIT OF BLOOD IN IT.
NO, NOT A BIRD, OBVIOUSLY.
UNLESS IT WAS A CHICKEN. THEY DON'T COUNT, DO THEY?
HUH-WEEL


Tweet
YES, I SEE HIM.
GOOD DAY, SIR.
GREETINGS, CHILD. MAY I SPEAK WITH YOU?
OF COURSE.
Squawk
NO, I DON'T TRUST HIM, EITHER.
OH MY GOD! BEHIND YOU!
ALL RIGHT, LITTLE ONE. I'LL PLAY YOUR GAME.
WOULD YOU MOCK A BLIND MAN? HAVE YOU NO RESPECT?

BLIND? THEN YOU HAVE NO CHANCE OF CATCHING US.

I DON'T NEED TO CATCH YOU...

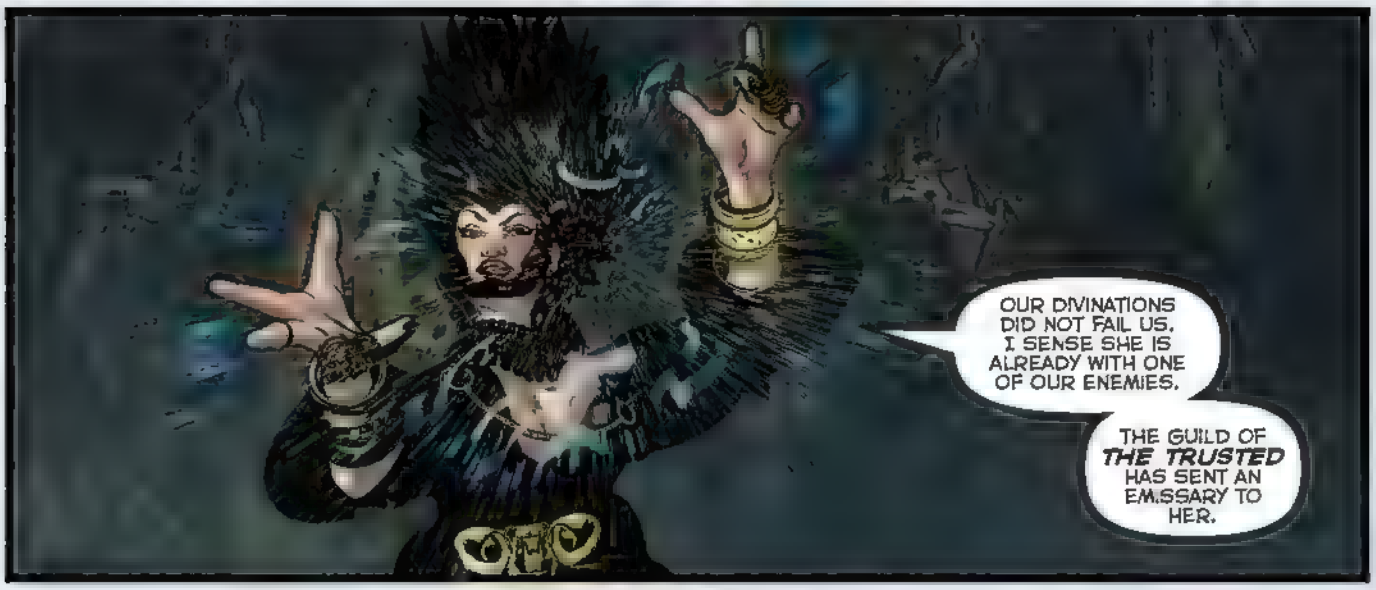
WHEN YOU RUN TO ME SO EAGERLY.
Oof

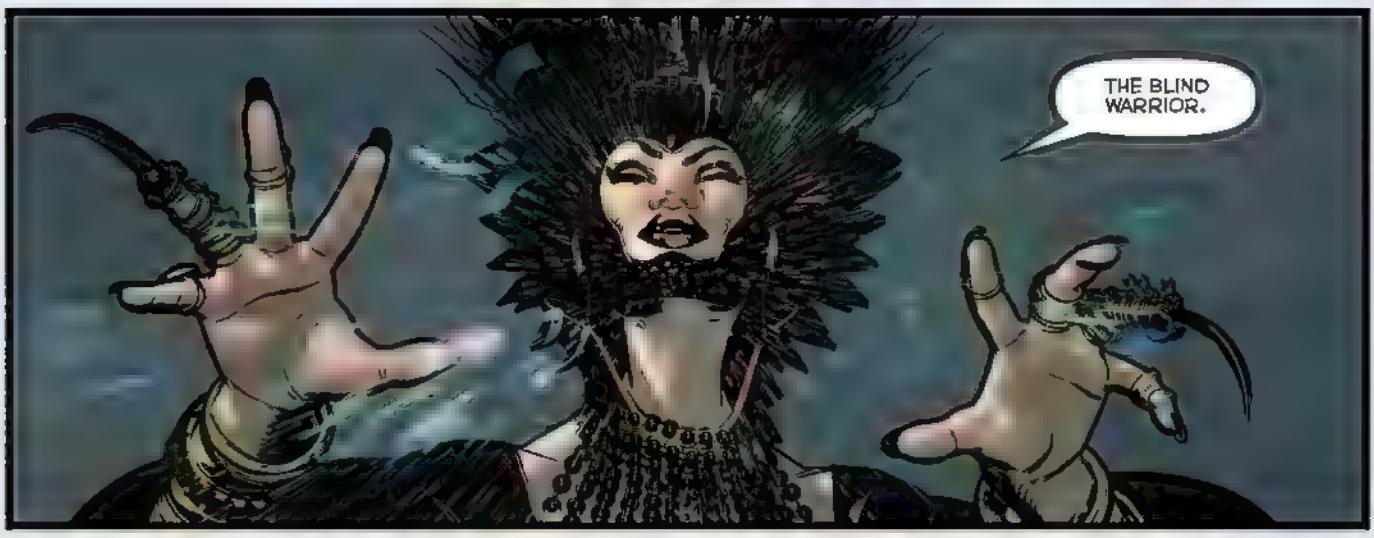
HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

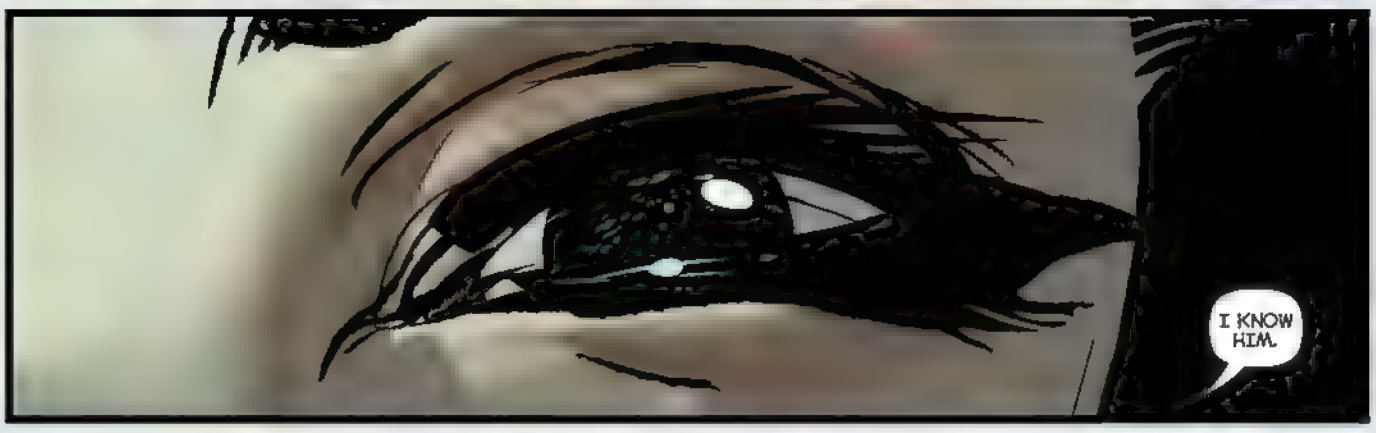
LONG YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE KING HAS BEEN GONE FROM THE CASTLE OF VALON, LONG YEARS A DARK QUEEN HAS SAT UPON THE THRONE.
YOU KNOW WHY I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE.
THE YOUNG MEN OF YOUR TRIBE HAVE CHOSEN TO FIGHT ME.
EVEN NOW THEY GATHER THEIR FORCES, LED BY A NEW CHAMPION.
A PITY THEY DIDN'T STAY HOME TO PROTECT YOU.
NOW, IF YOU WOULD LIVE, WHO AMONG YOU CAN TELL ME OF THE ARTIFACT KNOWN AS THE WITCHBLADE. WHO IS THE CANNY WOMAN OF YOUR TRIBE?
STEP FORTH!
OUR MEN ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WHO WILL FIGHT YOU. I AM THE LORE-KEEPER.
I KNOW THE ANCIENT WAYS AND I HAVE AN ARTIFACT OF MY OWN.
YOU ARE NOT THE ONE I SEEK. YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRAFT IS PITIFUL.

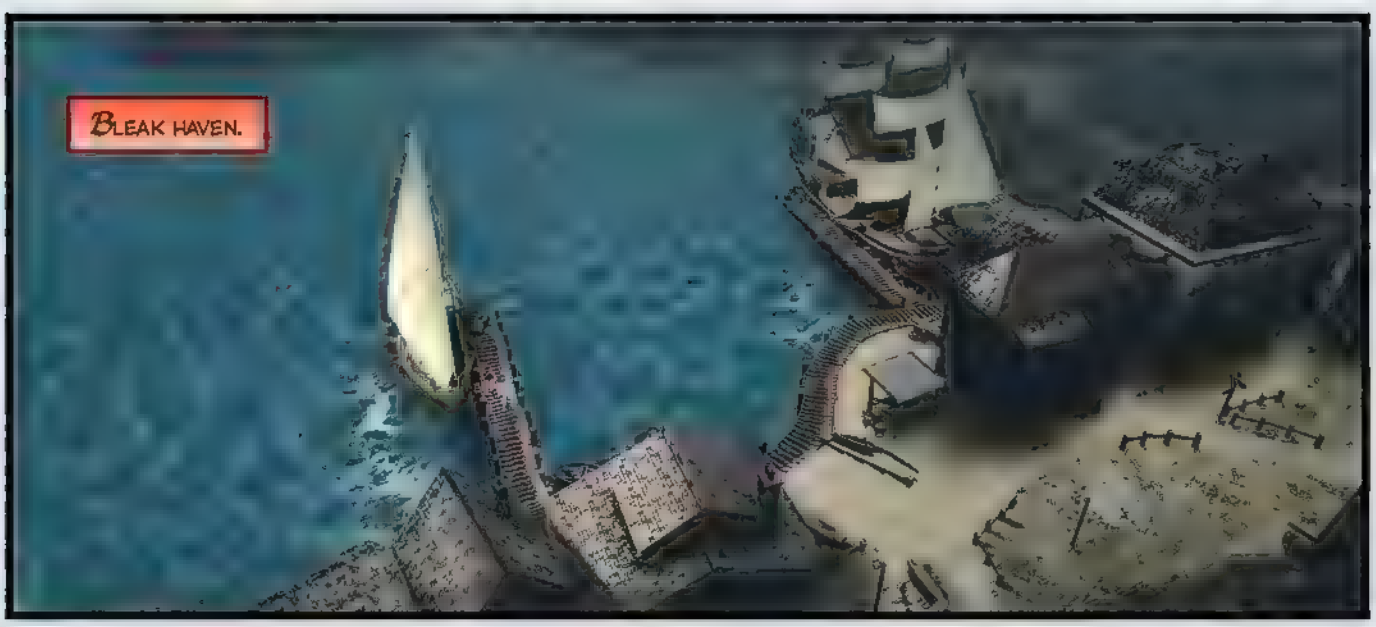
I TURN YOUR SPELL BACK UPON YOU. MAGNIFIED ONE THOUSANDFOLD.
NOW, IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO SHARE HER FATE, TELL ME TRULY, WHO ELSE AMONG YOU KNOWS THE WAYS OF WITCHCRAFT?
GIVE ME A NAME.
SH-SHE HAS A GRANDDAUGHTER CALLED STARLING. SHE WAS SENT AWAY AFTER HER MOTHER DIED.
THEY SAY SHE IS THE LAST IN THE LINE OF THE WISE WOMEN OF OUR TRIBE.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR BETRAYAL.
I WONDER WHAT YOUR MENFOLK WILL DO WHEN THEY LEARN WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE.
WILL THEY FIGHT US ALL THE HARDER, KNOWING THAT THEIR LOVED ONES HAVE DIED AT MY HAND?
WILL THEY CALL ON THEIR GODS TO PUNISH US?

STARLING.
IF THIS IS HER TRUE NAME, THEN SHE CANNOT HIDE FROM ME.
THE PEOPLE OF THIS CURSED WORLD HAVE DEFIED US FOR TOO LONG.
IT IS TIME TO SHOW THEM THE NATURE OF OUR POWER, THE SHAPE OF OUR HUNGER.
SEEK OUT THIS STARLING.
AND FETCH ME THE WITCHBLADE.


OUR DIVINATIONS DID NOT FAIL US. I SENSE SHE IS ALREADY WITH ONE OF OUR ENEMIES.
THE GUILD OF THE TRUSTED HAS SENT AN EMISSARY TO HER.

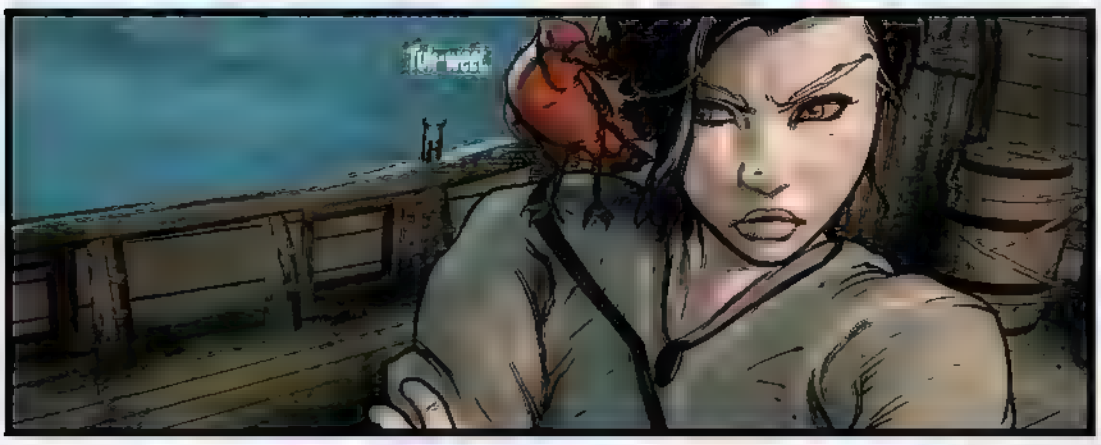

THE BLIND WARRIOR.


I KNOW HIM.

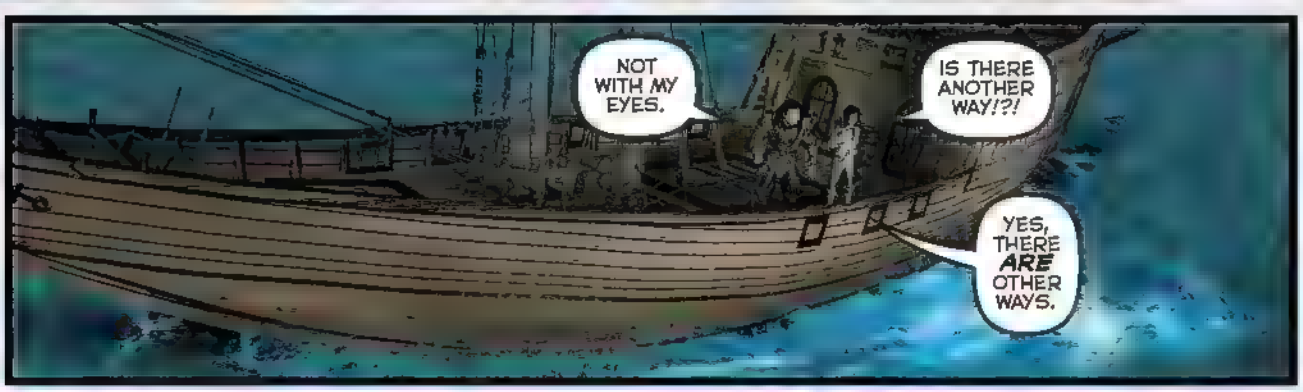

BLEAK HAVEN.

THERE'S A FAIR WIND AND CLEAR SKIES. IT'S TIME TO LEAVE, STARLING.
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME? WHY AM I EVEN HERE?
I SEEK A RELIC AND YOU ARE THE KEY TO FINDING IT.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANY RELIC. MY MOTHER...SHE'S... SHE'S A PRINCESS AND SHE'LL MAKE YOU--
YOUR MOTHER DEPARTED THIS EARTH YEARS SINCE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THIS?
YOU ARE PART OF SOMETHING... SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF... YOU ARE NOT NORMAL.
YOU'RE A FINE ONE TO SPEAK...
I TAKE NO OFFENSE. BUT THINK ON THIS...
HOW DID WE GET HERE? A WAVE OF MY HAND AND WE HAVE TRAVELED MANY MILES IN AN INSTANT.
YET YOU SHOW NO FEAR. WHY IS THAT?
IT SEEMED... AS IT SHOULD.
SEE? YOU ARE NOT NORMAL.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SWIM. WHAT IF THIS THING SINKS?
EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO SWIM...YOU JUST NEED TO REMEMBER... YOU SPENT THE FIRST PART OF YOUR LIFE SWIMMING IN YOUR MOTHER.



ALL RIGHT, TELL ME THIS. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?
YOU CAN'T SEE!


NOT WITH MY EYES.
IS THERE ANOTHER WAY!?!
YES, THERE ARE OTHER WAYS.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OUR ENEMY... I FEAR SHE HAS FOUND US.

STARLING!
DAMN YOU! HOW DID YOU PIERCE THE CLOAKING SPELLS I CAST TO PROTECT US?

AMKKK
YOU'RE CLOAKING SPELLS PROTECT YOU, BUT NOT THE YOUNG ONE. WHEREVER SHE GOES I CAN FIND HER.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON YOU. NOT WHILE THE CHILD IS IN DANGER.
THE BLIND MAN, HOW DID HE GAIN SUCH POWER?
I HAVE UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU.

With death near, something awakens in the young girl's mind.

A power that has lain dormant in her blood line for centuries.

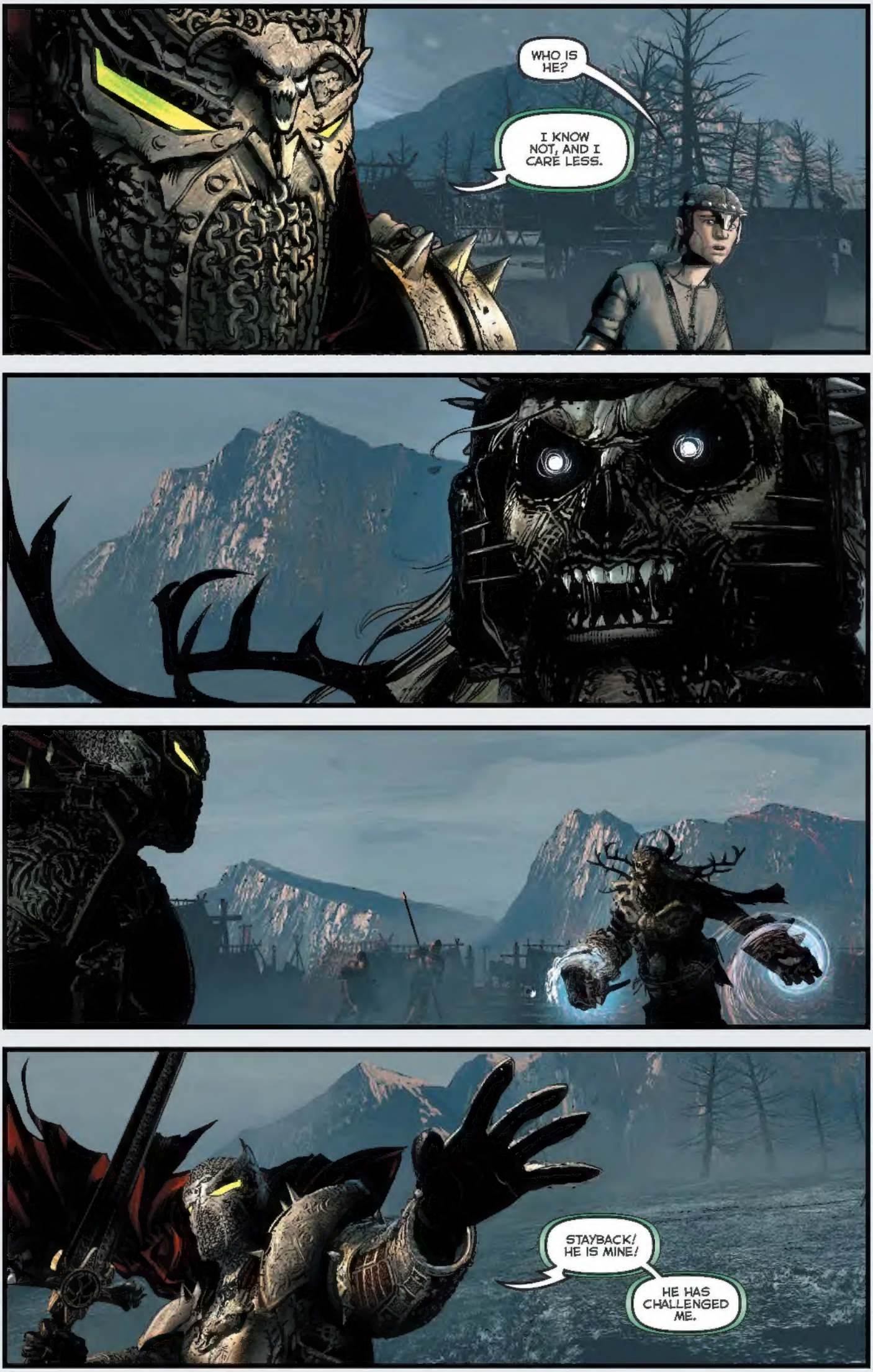
A POWER THAT BINDS HER TO THE WITCHBLADE.
IT TOO HAS LAIN DORMANT ALL THIS WHILE, WAITING FOR THE CHOSEN ONE.
FOR LONG MOMENTS, STARLING DRIFTS ON THE BORDER BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.
PERHAPS FOR ONE BRIEF INSTANT SHE EVEN CROSSES THAT BORDER...
...BUT THE WITCHBLADE DRAWS HER BACK...

WHAT IN THE ONE THOUSAND NAMES OF GOD-?
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SURPRISED, SEEKER? ISN'T THIS WHAT YOU WANTED?
S-SEA HAWK? HOW DID-?

THE WATER. I WAS...
..DROWNING..
ALL RIGHT, GIRL. I'VE GOT YOU.
YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
...AND SAFE AT LAST OF ALL...

THE ENCAMPMENT OF THE ARMY LED BY THE HELLSPAWN, ALSO KNOWS AS KING VALON.
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?
HOLD!
SSSSSSS

STEP FORTH, USURPER.
FACE YOUR DOOM!
THE BRAZEN CHALLENGE DOES NOT GO UNNOTICED BY KING VALON. IT ONLY SERVES TO STEEL HIS WILL.


WHO IS HE?
I KNOW NOT, AND I CARE LESS.
STAYBACK! HE IS MINE!
HE HAS CHALLENGED ME.

TO BE CONTINUED

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SON OF ULTRON